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Call to strengthen 6P amnesty plan to restrict inflow of illegals

KUALA LUMPUR: The influx of illegal foreign workers is expected to continue as barely 18.95 per cent of over two million workers were legalised during the 6P amnesty programme which was supposed to have ended on 15 Feb.

Due to the poor turnout, the Home Ministry, however, has decided to extend the deadline to 10 April for the authorities managed to legalise only 379,000 immigrants, including 94,856 who chose to return home.

Universiti Utara Malaysia political and international studies lecturer Md Shukri Shuib said efforts to restrict the inflow of illegal immigrants would be futile for locals shun low-paying jobs in various industrial sectors, forcing employers to seek workers from abroad.

"Even though some locals were willing to take up the jobs, their number is rather small compared to huge job opportunities and rapid development in our vibrant

industrial sectors.

"Lack of interest among locals to fill the vacuum in various industries led to employers resorting to hiring foreign workers to ensure that their operations run smoothly," he told Bernama.

On the low turnout during the 6P amnesty exercise, Md Shukri said the programme could be implemented effectively through concerted efforts from all quarters and not merely government agencies.

"Maybe it is better for the programme to be implemented continuously rather than on an ad-hoc basis for foreign workers will continue to flock to Malaysia due to our rapid development," he said. Universiti Teknologi Mara's Faculty of Administration and Policy Studies lecturer Dr Syarifah Syahirah Syed Sheikh said management companies appointed as intermediaries between employers and illegal foreign workers should be continuously moni-

tored.

"Ironically, irresponsible people have taken advantage of loopholes in its implementation," she said, adding that the 6P amnesty programme should be strengthened, added value and pursued aggressively.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian Muslim Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DPPMM), one of the management companies appointed under the 6P amnesty programme, signed a memorandum of understanding with Partai Amanat Nasional Indonesia (PAN), an Indonesian political party, on 16 Feb last year to formulate a mechanism to address the illegal immigrant problem.

DPPMM president Jamal Nasir said both parties were working together to set up the PAN Crisis Centre which would provide services to Indonesian illegal immigrants as well as facilitate the 6P amnesty programme. – Bernama